The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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FACING the FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

They tell us that John L. Lewis is marching up and down his air-conditioned office in Washington these days, gnashing his teeth and biting his nails in an effort to find some way to get back into the limelight as President of the CIO.

Of course, Lewis has remained the power behind the throne ever since Phil Murray was elected to the title of President last November. But that does not satisfy the CIO dictator. He is no shrinking violet. He does not bloom in the background. His love of power is matched only by his lust for notoriety and this lust will not be appeased until he regains his former office.

What grates on Lewis' nerves most is the enforced silence with which he must conduct himself in order to keep up appearances. Under present circumstances, even though Phil Murray is seriously ill in a Pittsburgh hospital and cannot attend to business, all important CIO statements must be issued under his name.

Just think of it! Lewis has been unable to issue a public blast ever since that campaign speech of his when he ignominiously defeated himself by predicting the defeat of Roosevelt. No wonder John L. has been suffering!

But from all reports we get Lewis has been doing a lot of rumbling and thundering behind closed doors lately. There isn't the slightest doubt in the world that these doors will be thrown open before long so that the terrific spectacle of John L. Lewis in full storm may be viewed by all and sundry.

The Lewis Come-Back

We read somewhere the other day that the projected Lewis comeback may hinge on the outcome of the present war between the forces of Hitler and Stalin. The sudden break in the Nazi-Soviet entente was a great break for Lewis—at least he thinks so. Allied as he is with the Communistic elements in the CIO, he figures that the new European lineup gives him a chance of entering once more within the pale of decent people. While the Communists and the Nazis were pals, the liberal fringe in this country who had previously been flirting with Lewis and the Stalin line suddenly became disillusioned. They suddenly discovered a hate for Lewis and denounced him with all their former fury of devotion. Exiled and cast out from the liberal fold, Lewis languished forlornly. But now he thinks he has a good chance of being welcomed back.

Still searching Lewis' mental convolutions, we find that he thinks his position will be especially fortified if Stalin succeeds in licking Hitler. Because the truth is that Lewis has not yet been converted to democracy. He still hates Roosevelt and all that the President stands for. He still is opposed to the national defense program. His dream is this—that if Stalin licks Hitler there will be no longer any cause for the United States to fear involvement in the war and the national defense program will be exposed as a waste of money and effort. That, in the opinion of Lewis, will make Roosevelt look silly and make himself look smart.

The Lewis dream does not end there. It goes on to the dim, distant future where he sees himself as a candidate for President of the United States with Senator Wheeler as his running mate on the ticket of the Shrunken Bellies Party.

Revolt in the CIO?

Well, we would like to caution Lewis, in the first place, to do a little reducing of his own paunch before he dares to run on that ticket or he will look a little silly in his own right.

In the second place, much as we pray for Hitler's defeat, we doubt that Soviet Russia will be able to accomplish it.

In the third place, no matter what happens in the future and no matter how the political picture changes, the chances of John L. Lewis ever being elected President of the United States are exactly nil.

However, it must be admitted that Lewis can be elected President of the CIO any time he wants to call a convention. He has the solid Communist bloc behind him, he has the support of all the paper unions he maintains out of the treasury of the United Mine Workers and, of course, he controls the mine union.

But, the chances are that if Lewis insists on being crowned again he will do so only at the risking of ripping the CIO wide open and losing some of its strongest unions.

The anti-Lewis forces in the CIO are led by Sidney Hillman. He has a strong following among the hosiery workers, the rubber workers and several other organizations, including the CIO auto workers. There is no love lost between Lewis and Hillman. Lewis told him at a recent CIO meeting that he would enjoy the pleasure of kicking him out of the CIO. He uttered fighting words and the editor of the "Advance," organ of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers replied in kind in a full-page article. It is indeed a significant fact that Hillman is the last of the original founders of the CIO who still remains in the Lewis organization and that now he is as welcome there as a time-bomb.

Court Overrules N. Y. Labor Board As AFL Union Wins Triboro Case

Albany, N. Y.—The Court of Appeals ruled that the State Labor Board lacked the power to set aside a union contract if industrial strife thereby would be promoted.

The decision was made in the case of the Triboro Coach Corporation of New York City. Local 1104 of the Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employes, A. F. L., was upheld as bargaining agency for Triboro workers over the Transport Workers Union, C. I. O.

The court overruled a Labor Board finding in favor of the T. W. U. and supported a lower court decision. The vote was 4 to 3.

The dispute began in 1937 when the C. I. O. affiliate sought to supplant the Amalgamated as representative of the employes. Amalgamated had a 1936 contract which was renewable each three years unless the parties to it canceled it ninety days before its expiration. This contract became effective when New York City granted an operating franchise.

Three months before the expiration date of the contract the T. W. U. asked the State Labor Board to certify it as the bargaining agency for the Triboro workers.

Meanwhile the Amalgamated and Triboro had made a new working agreement, which a majority of the employes ratified.

Subsequently the T. W. U. filed charges with the Labof Board that in refusing to negotiate with it Triboro was engaging in unfair labor practices. In February, 1940, the board issued a complaint based on the charges. It ruled that on or before July 17, 1939, Amalgamated and the corporation had elected to terminate the contract at the end of the then current term.

"It is our opinion that the decision found by the Labor Board puts a premium upon industrial unrest," Judge Edward R. Finch wrote. "The question presented for decision is whether employes, who have selected a labor union as their representative by joining and retaining membership therein, and who have allowed such selected representatives to make an agreement which is binding upon the employer, are in spite of this contract still entitled to a certificate from the Labor Board that they have selected another union as their bargaining representative in order to void the contract which they have previously made."

He added:

"It will be noticed that in this case the T. W. U. did not petition for an election to determine an appropriate agency until July 20, 1939. This was the same day that the period expired during which Triboro could have notified Amalgamated that it elected to terminate the July, 1936, agreement.

"Thus, after the expiration of the period during which notice to terminate the 1936 contract might be given, Triboro was bound by the closed shop provisions of that contract and was bound to negotiate with Amalgamated exclusively as to all conditions of employment which were covered by it.

"By waiting until the expiration of the period during which such notice might be given, the employes have in effect made a choice that Amalgamated is to be their representative for the next three years or until another representative is chosen, since they have not notified their employer or the Labor Board of a contrary intention."

The Triboro case was once used by George Meany, then president of the State Federation of Labor, as the basis for an attack on the Labor Board, which he accused of being "C. I. O.-minded."

Since the company has continued to deal with the Amalgamated while the case was before the courts, the ruling will not affect the company's relations with its employes, F. G. Fornatora, persident of the company, said.

CALIFORNIA COLLECTS $680,000 UNPAID WAGES

San Francisco, Calif.—More than $680,000 in unpaid wages was recovered during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1941, H. C. Carrasco, State Labor Commissioner, reported. This is the largest amount recovered since 1932 and represents an increase of 31 per cent over the preceding year.

During the 12 months period the labor commissioner received more than 29,000 complaints of alleged labor law violations, 23,000 of which represented complaints of failure to pay wages. The remainder involved statutes relating to the eight-hour day for women, child labor, weekly day of rest, employment agencies, collective bargaining wages, anti-kick back and other labor laws.

President Seeks Price Control Law To Stop Inflation of Living Costs

Wages Not Included Within Scope of Legislation But Roosevelt Warns Against "Abnormal" Increases

Washington, D. C.—Warning of the danger of inflation, President Roosevelt, in a special message, asked Congress for broad authority to establish ceilings for prices and rents and to curb excesses in the field of instalment credit.

No form of control over wage rates was suggested by the President who resisted the pressure of reactionary groups to freeze wage levels. He said in his message:

"Of course there cannot be price stability if labor costs rise abnormally. Labor has far more to gain from price stability than from abnormal wage increases. For these are likely to be illusory and quickly overtaken by sharp rises in living costs, which fall with particular hardship on the least fortunate of our workers and our old people.

"There will always be need for wage adjustments from time to time to rectify inequitable situations. But labor as a whole will fare best from a labor policy which recognizes that wages in the defense industries should not substantially exceed the prevailing wage rates in comparable non-defense industries where fair labor policies have been maintained.

"I recognize that the obligation not to seek an excessive profit from the defense emergency rests with equal force on labor and on industry, and that both must assume their responsibilities if we are to avoid inflation.

"I also recognize that we may expect the wholehearted and voluntary cooperation of labor only when it has been assured a reasonable and stable income in terms of the things money will buy, and equal restraint or sacrifice on the part of all others who participate in the defense program. This means not only a reasonable stabilization of prices and the cost of living but the effective taxation of excess profits and purchasing power. In this way alone can the nation be protected from the evil consequences of a chaotic struggle for gains which must prove either illusory or unjust, and which must lead to the disaster of unchecked inflation."

Mr. Roosevelt made it plain that he was asking only for the power to establish price ceilings, not to fix or freeze prices.

Sixty-First Annual A.F.L. Convention Will Open on October 6 in Seattle

Washington, D. C.—Official notice that the next annual convention of the American Federation of Labor will begin Monday morning, October 6, 1941, in Eagles Auditorium, Seattle, Washington, was sent to all affiliated unions by President Green and Secretary-Treasurer Meany.

Organizations to be entitled to representation must have obtained a certificate of affiliation (charter), at least one month prior to the Convention; and no person will be recognized as a delegate who is not a member in good standing of the organization he is elected to represent.

"Great changes have taken place during the past year in both the relation of industry and of labor to the Government," said the Convention Call. "These changes are directly traceable to the national emergency referred to by the President in his proclamation of May 27, 1941.

"As a result of this, the older problems which we have grappled with at annual conventions have become intensified and increased through the addition of newer problems which have arisen out of the existing national emergency and which must be faced and dealt with at the Seattle Convention. These problems can be classified as economic, social, industrial, organizational and administrative. They vitally affect the well-being of the millions of men and women included within the ranks of labor. For this special reason, there should be a full representation of all organizations affiliated with the American Federation of Labor at the Sixty-first Annual Convention.

"Those who attend the Convention must review the experiences of the past year, deal with the economic, social and industrial facts as they are presented in a constructive way and prepare to face the future resolutely determined to protect our liberties, our free institutions, our democratic form of government and all the rights of labor which the American Federation of Labor has jealously guarded and protected for three-quarters of a century. The workers of the nation are relying more than ever before upon the instrumentality of the American Federation of Labor to protect their economic rights, to lift their standards of life and living to higher levels, and to protect them against exploitation and regimentation such as has been imposed upon workers in other lands.

"The Sixty-first Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor will be a momentous Convention. The eyes of the nation will be centered upon its deliberations. Even the workers across the sea will turn their faces toward Seattle, hoping that the voice of labor as concretely expressed in this Convention will sound a note of hope and inspiration to them.

"We appeal to the membership of the American Federation of Labor to be represented at this historic Convention of the American Federation of Labor. Send your best and most capable representatives to attend and participate in this great Convention. We will meet in Seattle, the outstanding city of the northwest, in a territory and in a community where the standing and influence of the American Federation of Labor is recognized by all classes of people. We appeal to all American Federation of Labor organizations to be represented in this Convention so that decisions rendered and policies adopted will be accepted and regarded as a free expression of the overwhelming sentiment of the membership of the American Federation of Labor."

Credentials in duplicate are forwarded to all affiliated unions. The original credential should be given to the delegate-elect and the duplicate forwarded to the American Federation of Labor Office, A. F. of L. Building, Washington, D. C.

The Committee on Credentials will meet at the headquarters of the American Federation of Labor six days previous to the opening of the Convention, and will report immediately upon the opening thereof at Seattle, hence secretaries will observe the necessity of mailing the duplicate credentials of their respective delegates at the earliest possible moment to Washington, D. C.

Any resolutions or proposals received after the expiration of the time limits will be referred to the Executive Council and the Executive Council will refer all such proposals to the Convention with the understanding that acceptance of such proposals is dependent upon the unanimous consent of the Convention.

Any or all proposals emanating from directly affiliated local trade and federal labor unions will be referred to the Executive Council for consideration and disposition. The Executive Council will in turn advise the Convention of the disposition made of such proposal or proposals.

Three copies of each resolution or proposal should be furnished.

Hotel reservations in Seattle for the convention period may be made by writing to Claude O'Reilly, President, Central Labor Council, 552 Denny Way, Seattle, Washington.

Notice to Labor Press!

A special, illustrated Labor Day issue of the American Federation of Labor News Service will be distributed to the labor press within a few days. It will contain Labor Day messages from President Roosevelt, President William Green of the American Federation of Labor and Secretary-Treasurer George Meany. It will also highlight labor's contributions to the national defense program and include other useful material for the Labor Day editions of the labor press.

Mats of the illustrations will be distributed with the printed material.

All the material in the Labor Day issue is intended for use in Labor Day editions of the labor press. Publications appearing at any time during the last week of August and clearly designated as Labor Day issues may use any of the material contained in the special release of the A. F. of L. News Service WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE MESSAGE OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT. No publication appearing before the evening of August 30 may print the President's message. This release date has been fixed by the White House and must not be violated.

News Briefs

Green To Broadcast Talk on August 7

Chicago, Ill.—President William Green will deliver an important radio address on Thursday night, Aug. 7, from 8 to 8:15 P. M., Eastern Standard Time, on Labor and National Defense.

In this talk, President Green will discuss the extent to which the American Federation of Labor has contributed to the success of the national defense program on the basis of official reports of the War and Navy Departments and OPM.

Every member of the American Federation of Labor should listen to this noteworthy and instructive broadcast.

AFL INSURANCE AGENTS WIN TWO MORE CONTRACTS

Washington, D. C.—The Industrial and Ordinary Insurance Agents Unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor are continuing their progress, according to a statement by George L. Russ, A. F. of L. organizer.

Recently Union No. 21858 of Philadelphia signed a closed shop agreement, including the check-off system, with the Industrial Life Insurance Company of that city providing a minimum guaranteed collection salary of $25 weekly, vacations with pay, sick leave with pay and guarantee of position when returning to work. Union No. 21623 of Baltimore, Md., signed a contract with the Peoples Life Insurance Company of Washington, D. C., providing for a guaranteed salary of $25, wage increases based on length of service, vacations with pay and the five-day week.

COURT ENJOINS COMPANIES IN WAGE-AND-HOUR SUIT

New York, N. Y.—Judge John W. Clancy of the United States District Court signed injunctions against 38 companies and individuals in the shoulder-strap industry as the Wage and Hour Division and Children's Bureau of the U. S. Department of Labor moved jointly to end exploitation of women industrial home workers and to prevent future employment of children less than 16 years of age. The injunctions ordered the defendants to pay 741 of their employes $34,244 in back wages and overtime compensation to which they were entitled under the wage and hour law.

GULF METAL TRADES UNIT RATIFIES LABOR CONTRACT

Tampa, Fla.—The Gulf Coast Metal Trades Council of the American Federation of Labor ratified a two-year zone labor agreement for ten shipyards along the Gulf Coast, contingent on supplementary agreements between individual yards and their employes. The agreement, designed to provide an average increase of ten per cent in wages in Gulf yards, provides a basic wage of $1.07 an hour for mechanics, 40 cents an hour more for second and third shifts, time and a half for overtime on new construction and double time on ship repairs, except on large Government conversion contracts.

1,500,000 WORKERS GAIN INCREASES IN PAY RATES

Washington, D. C.—Hourly and weekly earnings of wage earners in manufacturing industries in May registered a sharp advance, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins reported. "The rise in earnings to new high levels in May resulted from widespread wage increases and extension of overtime operations in many industries," she said. "During the past 2 months general wage-rate increases affecting nearly 1,500,000 workers have been reported to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Indicative of overtime conditions among the durable goods industries where most of the defense rise in earnnigs to new high levels in production is concentrated, 37 of the 43 durable goods industries regularly tabulated reported operations in excess of 40 hours per week per wage earner."

KNITTED FABRIC WORKERS WIN WAGE BOOST CONTRACT

New York, N. Y.—A $2 weekly increase in wages for all knitted fabric workers was to meet the increased cost of living announced by Louis Nelsen, manager of the Knitgoods Workers' Union, Local 155, International Ladies' Garment Workers. The increase was in accordance with the agreement with the Association of Knitted Fabrics Manufacturers, Inc., permitting the union to open the question of increasing wages whenever the cost of living goes up.

The union also announced that the agreement with the Kag Association (Knitted Accessories Group) has been renewed for two years. The new agreement provides for a minimum wage scale of $16 per week and increases varying from $2 to $8 per week per person. There is also a provision for a week's vacation with pay.

Smith's Re-Appointment to Labor Board Opposed by A. F. L. Executive Council

Says He Interpreted Labor Relations Act Hostile to the A. F. of L. and Became "Crusader for the CIO"

Chicago, Ill.—The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, at its mid-summer session here, expressed confidence that President Roosevelt will refuse to re-appoint Edwin S. Smith as a member of the National Labor Relations Board when his term expires August 27.

The Executive Council reviewed Mr. Smith's record and found him "unfit to remain in office." The statement added:

"The record shows that Mr. Smith has been largely responsible for the bias, unfairness and prejudice which until recently characterized many of the Labor Board's decisions and permeated its administrative setup.

"From the beginning of his service, Mr. Smith espoused interpretations of the National Labor Relations Law which were entirely foreign to letter and spirit of the Act and which were distinctly hostile to the American Federation of Labor. Instead of acting as an impartial administrator of the law, he became an active crusader for the CIO. He exercised a powerful influence over two former members of the Labor Board and over its staff. He was and still is the mainspring of the Communistic group which almost succeeded in making a mockery of the law which was conceived as labor's magna charta.

"In 1937 the American Federation of Labor began a campaign for a complete housecleaning of the Labor Board. To date this drive has resulted in constructive changes beneficial to labor and the nation. Two new members—William Leiserson and Walter Millis—were named by President Roosevelt to succeed Donald Wakefield Smith and former Chairman G. Warren Madden when the terms of the latter expired. Chairman Millis and Dr. Leiserson inaugurated a new era in Labor Board history. They promptly changed unfair regulations, reversed unjust decisions and started to purge the Labor Board's staff of Communists and fellow travelers.

"It is noteworthy that Edwin S. Smith did everything in his power to hinder and obstruct these vitally necessary changes and is still carrying on a bitter, last-ditch fight against the majority of the Labor Board.

"In view of this record, the Executive Council is fully confident that the President of the United States will refuse to reappoint Edwin S. Smith and will name a qualified man of judicial temperament to succeed him."

Problems relating to national defense will be the chief business before the Council at its two-week session. President William Green will report to the Council on the progress of the defense program, according to information received from the War and Navy Departments and the Office of Production Management.

Among other topics to be considered by the Executive Council are: Defense unemployment, inflation, foreign policy, legislation and defense housing.

Before the expiration of the meeting, the Council will also draft its annual report to the next Convention of the American Federation of Labor which opens in Seattle on October 6.

CARPENTERS CELEBRATE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Chicago, Ill.—A monster celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America will be held in Chicago Stadium August 8.

A crowd of 25,000 is expected to jam the huge convention hall to hear a long list of distinguished speakers and an entertainment program which includes the stars of stage, screen and music.

President William Hutcheson of the Carpenters and President William Green of the American Federation of Labor will deliver the principal addresses. Governor Green of Illinois and Mayor Kelley of Chicago will welcome the hosts of labor in attendance.

AFL UNION WINS ARMS PLANT CASE

Washington, D. C.—Confronted with clear indications that their vital defense plant was on the verge of being taken over by the Government, the management of the Western Cartridge Co. agreed to proposals for settling their long drawn out labor dispute.

The East Alton (Ill.) munitions and powder concern accepted certain of the Defense Mediation Board recommendations and agreed with the A. F. of L. Chemical Workers Union to negotiate on other points at issue.

Commenting on the Western Cartridge Co. case, a board official declared that the management had unmistakable intimations that its rejection of board recommendations would be followed immediately by moves for Army occupation and operation of the factory.

The Western Cartridge company's management has been privately characterized as the most "recalcitrant" to come before the board.

A last-minute hitch in a settlement developed when the company indicated to the union that it was unwilling to accept board recommendations for a maintenance-of-union membership guarantee, the principal issue in the dispute. On Monday, the company had "raised no question" about this proposal, according to Charles E. Wyzanski, chairman of the board panel considering the case.

Wyzanski explained at a press conference the company finally withdrew its opposition to the maintenance-of-membership clause, and signed a statement accepting certain parts of the board's settlement formula. The other issues, relating to wages and vacations, are to be negotiated directly, by mutual agreement between company and union, Wyzanski said.

The company, which holds several million dollars of defense contracts, employs 525 workers in the smokeless powder division, where the dispute over union recognition centered.

INSURANCE GROUP PLANS WAGE ACT COMPLIANCE

Chicago, Ill.—The American Mutual Alliance, a group of more than 100 of the nation's largest mutual fire and casualty insurance companies, announced the intention of the companies to initiate a program of voluntary compliance with the terms of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act which includes provisions for the 40-hour week and a minimum wage of not less than 30 cents per hour. The group of companies in the alliance writes approximately 60 per cent of all mutual fire and casualty insurance in the United States.

Meany Stresses Labor's Patriotism In Making Defense Mediation Work

Washington, D. C.—George Meany, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of Labor, writing in the August issue of the American Federationist, paid tribute to the patriotism of the millions of members of the A. F. of L. during the present national emergency.

Mr. Meany's article was entitled "Four Months of Defense Mediation" and in it he described the establishment of the National Defense Mediation Board and the record of cooperation for the good of the nation which has been established by the unions affiliated with the Federation.

"The American Federation of Labor has long advocated democratic machinery for settling disputes in a voluntary way," Mr. Meany wrote. "The National Defense Mediation Board, in a large measure, has supplied this mechanism.

"In return, the millions of members of the American Federation of Labor have shown, on the basis of the record, a measure of responsibility unequaled in this country's industrial history. Since the National Defense Mediation Board was established, there have been more sweeping changes in wages and conditions with less time lost through industrial disputes than ever before in our nation's history.

"This in itself is a real tribute to the patriotism of the officers and members of the American Federation of Labor.

"The work of the National Defense Mediation Board is a healthy and encouraging demonstration of the value of democratic cooperation among labor, management and government in the interests of the national welfare. By and large, labor and industry alike have accepted the recommendations of the Mediation Board because obviously the recommendations have been practical in themselves.

"While we shall continue to insist on the right to strike when all other means of attaining labor's legitimate objectives have failed, the policy of the American Federation of Labor will be to cooperate with the National Defense Mediation Board and other governmental agencies in an effort to reduce the number of industrial disputes to the vanishing point.

"To achieve that result will require the wholehearted effort of workers, employers and the organized community. To obtain that effort requires mutual confidence, cooperation and a decent human relationship between all parties which will place the goal of national defense as our major objective.

"It is our job to demonstrate that an aroused people, blessed with ample resources, can defend itself by voluntary processes while living together in a civilized structure of mutual understanding and respect."